

## Lesson Plan – “Holidays”

Target Language: English  
Level: High Intermediate  
Population: Adult ESL Students  
Topic: “Holidays”  
Class Duration: 2 hours

- **Objectives:**
  - SWBAT use their previous knowledge about holidays to complete a task.
  - SWBAT visualize where certain American holidays fit on the calendar.
  - SWBAT learn about less common American holidays
  - SWBAT compare holidays that seem similar (i.e. Valentine’s Day and Sweetest Day)
  - SWBAT use their reading skills to complete a task.
  - SWBAT comprehend new vocabulary such as “inauguration.”
  - SWBAT use their listening skills to look for bottom-up (specific vocabulary) and top-down (content and meaning) answers for handout C.
  - SWBAT use authentic listening material to complete a task (see handout D)
  - SWBAT compare their holidays with American holidays and other holidays from around the world.
  - SWBAT comprehend new terminology such as national holiday and federal holiday and be able to identify the 11 federal holidays in the U.S.
  - SWBAT generate ideas about words associated with some American holidays.
  - SWBAT describe a scene to their partner using vocabulary that has certain restrictions. SWBAT complete this task using their new knowledge about synonyms.
  - SWBAT learn about common phrases heard during certain American holidays.
- **Materials:**
  - Blackboard and chalk
  - Handouts (See handouts A, B, C, D, and F)
  - Overhead projector and pen
  - Blank pieces of paper provided by the students
  - Computer with internet connection
  - Cards for activity (See appendix E)
- **Introduction: “What American Holidays do you Know?”**
  - Approx. Time: 10-15 minutes
  - Procedure:
    - The students will be asked what American holidays they already know about and list them on a scrap piece of paper.
    - The students will then share out loud some of their responses they wrote down to the teacher, who will write them on the board.
    - Next, the teacher will allow the students to explain some of the holidays written on the board.

- During this activity the more common holidays will be discussed (such as New Year, Fourth of July, Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas). If these holidays were not mentioned by the students then the teacher will briefly discuss what they are, when they're celebrated, and why.
  - Test of Comprehension:
    - Students' comprehension will be checked as they volunteer information about the holidays generated and listed on the blackboard. Comprehension of the more common holidays will be checked in the following activity.
  - Error Resolution:
    - If certain students do not seem interested in volunteering information the teacher may call on those students to write an American holiday they know on the blackboard.
- **Timeline Activity (See Appendix A)**
  - Approx. Time: 15-20 minutes
  - Procedure:
    - Students will break into groups of two people each to complete this task.
    - Students will be asked to use the words in the box above and place these words in the appropriate spaces below on the timeline.
    - The teacher will walk around the class at this point to make sure the activity is being performed correctly by the students.
    - Afterwards the teacher will go through the correct answers with the students. (The teacher may draw a timeline on the blackboard as s/he goes over the answers). At this point students will be encouraged to revise their previous answers if incorrect.
  - Test of Comprehension:
    - Students will be asked by the teacher to help fill in the blanks as the class goes over the answers.
  - Error Resolution:
    - If students do not seem to know many of the answers then they may ask their partner for help. As well, in the beginning of this activity the teacher will remind students that if they are unable to fill in all the blanks that that's okay and that the answers will be discussed as a class.
- **Matching Activity (See Appendix B)**
  - Approx. Time: 25-30 minutes
  - Procedure:
    - The teacher will explain that there are other, less common holidays in the U.S. that some Americans like to observe and celebrate.
    - Pre-activity: Before giving out the handout, the students will learn a few new vocabulary words/places and their meanings. The words/places that will be explained are:
      - "Folklore", "groundhog", "mardi gras", "pranks", "practical jokes", "costumes", "armistice", "workforce", "fools", New Orleans (LA), "veterans", and "affection."
      - These words will be written on the blackboard and the students will be asked to write them down on a blank piece of paper along with their meanings

- The students will have an opportunity to try and figure out what these words/places are. The students may get into groups to try and come up with definitions for these words. (The students will be encouraged to try and come up with a definition for these words based on any prior knowledge they have, or what they can deduce from the structure or elements of the words. An example of this type of guesstimation may be provided by the teacher).
      - The teacher will ask for their potential definitions and afterwards the teacher will give the correct definitions and explain each word/place.
    - Students will be given the handout and asked to go through and match the holiday with its correct description in groups of two.
    - Afterward the students will find a new partner to compare and revise their answers
    - Finally the students will be able to go through the answers as a class. The teacher may make an overhead translucent copy of the handout to display with a projector to the class as they go through the answers. The teacher will write in the correct answers on the overhead copy as the students provide answers.
  - Test of Comprehension:
    - Students' comprehension of the meaning of the less common holidays will be tested by completing the task in handout B. The teacher will call on students at the end of this activity to provide the correct answer which will also test comprehension.
  - Error Resolution:
    - The teacher will remind the class before they do the activity that if they are unsure about some of the answers that they should try to mark what they think is the best answer and move on. The students will also be reminded that the class will go over the answers at the very end of the activity.
- CLASS BREAK (5-10 minutes)
- **NPR Listening Activity (See Appendix C and D)**
  - Approx. Time: 30-40 minutes
  - Procedure:
    - Pre-activity: The teacher will lead a discussion on the different terminology of American holidays.
      - The students will receive handout C from the teacher
      - Before beginning the handout, students will be asked if they know the difference between a national holiday, a federal holiday, and a non-federal holiday. (The teacher will write these words on the blackboard as well as the students' responses underneath each term)
      - The students will then go through activity one of handout C and jot down some potential answers to what the difference is between a national, federal, and non-federal holiday.
      - Next, the teacher will explain the difference between a national, a federal, and a non-federal holiday in the U.S.
      - The students will then go back through activity one of handout C and make corrections to their previous guesses.

- The students will get into groups afterwards to compare answers as the teacher walks around the room observing
  - Next the teacher will introduce activity two from handout C and explain new words/names such as (inauguration, George Washington, and Columbus) in case not all the students know these words/names.
  - Students will then do activity two independently while teacher walks around the room. Students will have been reminded beforehand to consider what they just learned about federal and non-federal holidays.
  - After independently completing activity two of handout C, students will get into pairs and discuss and modify their answers.
  - The teacher then will go over the answers together as a class. The teacher will use the blackboard to draw a similar chart to the one in activity two on the students' handout C. Under each title ("federal" and "non-federal" holidays) the teacher will use the class' responses to write the correct holidays under their appropriate classification.
  - Students will be instructed to correct their papers as the correct answers are being mentioned.
  - The teacher will explain that most religious holidays are not federal holidays with the exception of Christmas.
- Activity
- The teacher will re-explain who Columbus was in preparation for this activity.
  - The students will receive handout D and will be asked to first go through and guess if the answers will be True or False based on their previous knowledge.
  - The students will then hear the following clip from NPR up to 1:07 minutes  
(<http://www.npr.org/templates/player/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=6223911&m=6223912>).
  - After listening to the clip, students will be asked to revise their answers.
  - The students then will hear the clip again.
  - Next the students will get with a partner and compare answers and make further revisions
  - After this the students will be able to go over the answer as a class.
  - If time permits: Before the teacher and students go over the answers as a class, the teacher may ask students to re-write all the answers they marked *false* and to make them true on a scrap piece of paper which the students will provide.
- Post-Activity Discussion
- Students will be asked to go around the room and compare what they've learned about American holidays with holidays they have in their own country and their classmates' countries.
  - The teacher will write the following questions on the board

- Do you have federal holidays in your country?
  - Do workers and students get time off from work or school on these holidays?
  - What is your favorite American holiday and why?
- The students will take out a scrap piece of paper and will go around the room asking each other these questions. (The teacher may provide a previously-made handout with a grid containing all the students' names in that class and spaces for their responses to questions 1, 2, and 3.)
- After this activity students will share their responses out loud to the class.
- Test of Comprehension:
  - Students will be given multiple opportunities to share their answers to the above mentioned pre-, during, and post-activities. The answers to these activity questions help demonstrate that the student has comprehended the new material.
- Error Resolution:
  - If students find the video too fast, the teacher may remind the students to review the questions on handout D first. Then the students should try and look for particular words or phrases that are found in the questions, and to listen for those words/phrases in the audio clip. The teacher may need to play the clip for a 3<sup>rd</sup> time.
- **Holiday Greetings and Images Activity (See Appendix E and Handout F)**
  - Approx. Time: 20-30 minutes
  - Procedure
    - Pre-activity:
      - Using the blackboard students will be asked to think of words that they associate with certain American holidays like Christmas and Halloween. These words will be written on the board for all the students to see, and possible refer back to during the activity.
      - Next the teacher will explain to the students what synonyms are and provide examples of some synonyms using the blackboard.
    - Taboo-Like Activity:
      - The students will get into pairs.
      - One student will receive a card with a picture on it representing a scene from a certain American holiday. Underneath the picture there is a list of words that the student cannot use when describing their picture to their partner.
      - (The cards with the holiday pictures will be printed on colored paper to prevent the other students from seeing through the card during the activity)
      - The first student will need to describe the scene in their picture to their partner without directly showing them the picture or using the forbidden words listed. The second student will need to try and guess what holiday is being represented.

- The teacher *will* model this activity beforehand to the class using different pictures.
  - While the groups are performing the activity, the teacher will walk around the class to monitor that the activity is being done properly. The teacher will check to make sure that each group was able to complete the activity and identify the holiday correctly..
  - Once the groups have correctly identified their holidays the teacher may collect, mix up, and redistribute the pictures to different student pairs and have them repeat the activity
- Post-Activity (if time allows):
- Students will be given handout F
  - Students will first go through and try and identify sayings/greetings that they may hear during the holiday displayed in the pictures on handout F.
  - Once the students have had time to go through handout F, as a class students will volunteer sayings/greetings to the teacher for each holiday. (The teacher will write the name of each holiday on the board as students give their responses).
  - The teacher will introduce other sayings/greetings that students may have missed or not be aware of. The students will be asked to add these new sayings/greetings down on their handout F.
  - If any sayings/greetings need explanation then the teacher and class together will try and explain their meaning.
  - The teacher then will lead the class into discussion over some of the sayings/greetings. The teacher may hint at potential discussion topics for the students to notice, such as:
    - Why do we say “Happy Easter” but not “Happy Christmas?”
    - How do most Americans celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day?
    - Why do we have “Merry Christmas” but also “Happy Holidays?” (Issue of religion).
- Test of Comprehension
- The students will need to correctly identify the holiday in Activity E. The teacher will go around the room to make sure the task is correctly completed by each student pair.
- Error Resolution
- If the class size is large then the teacher may divide the class in half and for each half they will each get one of the cards in Appendix E (See graphic below):

